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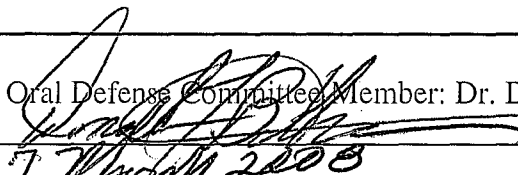
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**The PRT Concept
US Experiences and their Relevance for Norway**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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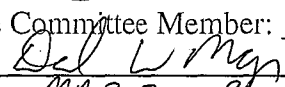
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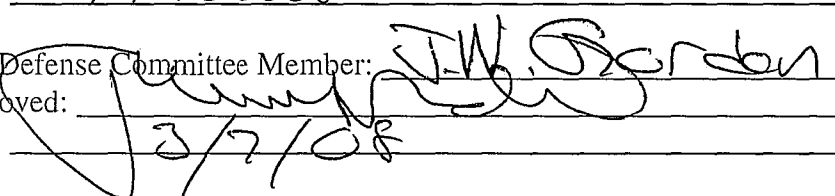
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Executive Summery

Title: The PRT Concept – US Lessons Learned and their Relevance for Norway.

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Thesis: US experience with the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) concept has influenced the International Stabilization Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), and thereby Norway's concept of operations of PRTs in Afghanistan.

Discussion:

One of the goals of this study is to examine challenges connected with the establishment of such a concept, which is inter-agency and civil-military in nature. The PRTs should also be considered as a test of Western nations' ability to conduct nation building or stabilization operations after the end of conventional phases of armed conflicts within failed states.

Norway gained lead nation responsibility in PRT Meymaneh in August 2005. The PRT concept was very new to the Norwegian Armed Forces. After having gained this responsibility, Norway faced challenges of operating with other agencies, NGOs, and coalition partners, in an area which was very logistically demanding to maintain.

Military units' interference into local politics and the humanitarian environment have lead to a requirement for competent people and cooperation with organizations outside the military. This kind of operation, where the delineation between military and civilian tasks is blurred or non-existing, is also controversial in some countries. Further; interdepartmental rivalry and differing interests compared with the non-governmental organizations is still an obstacle to optimal PRT operations.

Considering the differences in size and global reach between Norway and the USA, it is important to keep in mind that Norway should be cautious not to automatically copy US approaches.

Conclusion: The main findings of studying international sources are highly relevant to a Norwegian approach. Most of the practical challenges which have been faced by PRTs have their solutions. The question whether countries like the USA and Norway have the will to change the culture to reach such solutions is an open question.

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Preface

During my period as an Operations Officer in the Norwegian National Contingent Command (NOR NCC) in Afghanistan in 2005, I took part in the work of assuming lead nation responsibility for the ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Meymaneh in North Afghanistan. The contingent staff was quite busy with the implied tasks of having a lead nation's responsibility. The most challenging of these were related to logistics, transportation, and infrastructure.

Personal experience with the challenges connected to run a PRT made me curious to learn more about this concept. My point of view was that Norway, having chosen to assume the responsibility for a sector in Afghanistan, should facilitate not only military resources to the area, but other parts of our national power, such as law and order, economic, and humanitarian efforts. During my education at the USMC Command & Staff College, I found that other countries have similar challenges with a developing a smooth organizing of inter agency operations. Through the year in Quantico, much knowledge has been achieved concerning the challenges of inter-agency operations. The Irregular Warfare block and Counterinsurgency exercise in Warfighting from the Sea, and, seminars about the Philippines, Malaya, Vietnam, and Afghanistan have further brought this awareness to me. Also, the study of European imperialist theorists have contributed to a realization that the contemporary problems Western nations face have similarities (and, of course, differences) with historical events. Without claiming bombastically that inter-agency and civil-military operations are the future, I believe they often will be a part of the future. By exploiting the access of sources which I was provided by the Marine Corps

University, I have gained insight to the US experiences from PRT missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The shortcomings of this study are probably obvious for a PRT expert. Due to the limited space of this study, the target audience of readers should probably be those who are not well informed about the concept, but who seek some understanding of it. If the reading of this study makes the reader interested in seeking further knowledge by further reading or by serving in a PRT, this work will not be wasted.

During the work on this paper, I have had great support from Breckenridge Library and History Division in the Marine Corps University in Quantico. Essential support was also provided by Colonel Jon Morten Mangersnes and Lieutenant Colonel Odd Andreas Søbstad at the J-3 Land Operations Section at the Norwegian National Joint Headquarters in Stavanger. I would also thank my Norwegian fellow officer, Major Trond Flatemo, for sharing his insight during his concurrent work on the decision making process behind the Norwegian decision to take lead nation responsibility. During the whole period of my work on my thesis, I have received support by my mentor, Dr. Donald Bittner, who also is my faculty advisor. His feedback and encouragement has been outstanding.

Finally I want to thank my family, my wife, Nada, my daughter, Maria, and the daughter who still waits to be born, Aleksandra. Nada has provided outstanding support during my military service, not the least when she in her first year as a mother had to face the challenges of parenthood alone, and also during my year at Quantico.

INTRODUCTION

Norway gained responsibility as the lead nation of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Meymaneh in the Faryab Province in Northern Afghanistan on 1 Aug 2005 (see Appendix B, map of PRTs in Afghanistan). By doing this, the country stepped into a new kind of operation, where civil-military and inter-agency operations occur. Since the first PRTs were established by the US, it would be prudent to draw lessons from that nation's PRT experience. This study is, therefore, based to a large extent on US sources and experience from PRTs in Afghanistan, but not entirely limited to those.

Initially, the evolution of the PRT concept will be described; then some of the key challenges related to PRTs are addressed. These include domestic frames for civil-military operations, cooperation with local authorities, cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs), force protection, cooperation with State Department, intelligence, and command and control. Afterwards, there will be a description of how the USA has been able to draw lessons learned from the PRT experience, mentioning key elements of ISAF PRT Handbook and the USMC Concept for Inter-Agency Design. Then, Norwegian realities will be described, together with lessons from the PRT history which should be known and by Norwegian PRT personnel and decision makers.

HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES BEFORE THE PRT CONCEPT

Britain and France have long traditions of interagency and civil-military operations cooperation from their imperial experiences. The British counterinsurgency in Malaya serves as an example of a successful application of military forces supporting police and civilian authorities.¹ The French strategy of building safe zones of prosperity and then expanding these zones, the oil-spot (or ink-spot) theory, is another useful example.² Looking back on US history, the USMC's

Combined Action Program (CAP), which was established in 1965 during the Vietnam War, provides an interesting US predecessor for the modern PRT concept. The CAPs contributed to empowerment of the anti-communists by organizing protection, maintaining law and order in the local communities, and by destroying Vietcong infrastructure within the village or hamlet area of responsibility, by participation in civic action and conduct propaganda against the Vietcong.³ Thus, they are the reason for some assertions that the PRT heritage can be traced back to the CAPs. The Vietnam War also offers another experience considering the nature of irregular wars. A study was conducted to find the reasons of why Viet Cong was able to win the population in Long An, and this quote covers the essence of the reality of the PRT environment:

Here it is crucial to note why "development" was not a preemptive measure: it did not offer contingent incentives, and therefore it did not motivate forces. Economic development would go on regardless of who won, although it might be delayed while deciding who would win. Thus it was simply not an issue in the struggle. Moreover, such development programs as existed brought benefits to members of rural communities regardless of their behavior.⁴

Intimidation from the enemy, who does not feel restricted by any laws, is a counterforce to the counterinsurgent's efforts to win the population. Therefore, it is possible to set link any benefits to compliance, in Afghanistan's situation, to loyalty to the Government of Afghanistan (GOA). The importance of this linkage has also been stressed by the Australian Lt Col (Retired) David Kilcullan, who is a counterinsurgency expert and advisor for the US State Department.

EVOLUTION OF THE PRT CONCEPT

Removing the Taliban government from power was not enough to create stability in Afghanistan. Western forces had to deal with a situation where local and individual security had collapsed and had to be re-established after 30 years of war and turmoil. The Afghans had a poor economy and infrastructure, and after the Taliban's fall local war lords dominated the society.

Therefore, after Taliban was ousted from power in December 2001, Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Cells (CHLCs) and U.S. Army Civil Affairs Teams-Afghanistan (CAT-As) were established, in order to counter the challenges confronting Afghan society. These efforts did not succeed due to the stronger emphasis on combat operations.

In 2002 the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established. Its initial focus and boundaries was concentrated around Kabul. Very simplistically the Coalition forces would fight against Taliban and al Qaida kinetically while the main focus of ISAF was on stabilization. During the summer of 2002, US officials then developed a concept to spread the "ISAF effect."⁵ (Interestingly, at that moment ISAF had no PRTs). The first US units were initially called Joint Regional Teams (JRTs) by CENTCOM. After the request from President Karzai, the name was changed to PRTs in January 2003, thus indicated that one of the purposes of this kind of unit was to support the government and to contribute to reconstruction.⁶ The first PRT was established in Gardez in early 2003. Eventually, the US had a number of PRTs consisting of soldiers, Afghan advisors, and representatives from civilian agencies such as US State Department, USAID and US Department for Agriculture.⁷

The US PRTs conducted force protection and quick impact assistance projects. The British PRTs emphasized Afghan security sector reform, and helped defuse confrontations between rival warlords.⁸ The German PRTs were larger, consisted of more civilians, and they had a more comprehensive approach to their mission than the British.⁹ The ISAF PRT Handbook describes the ISAF interpretation of the development of PRTs:

2002 – The Chiclets: The identification of the causes of instability: insurgency, regionalism/warlordism, weak governance, and poverty. PRTs were established

2003 – Validating the concept: The establishing of the PRTs in Bamyan, Konduz, Mazar, Kanda-

har and Herat. The differences in environment led to different approaches, with differences further increasing when other coalition and ISAF nations took responsibility.

2004 – Laying the Foundation: During this period the understanding rose that kinetic operations were not going to lead to success. Three regional coordinators were established to decentralize decision making processes. The PRTs in ISAF reported directly to COM ISAF. The number of political, developmental, and subject matter experts increased.

2005 – Expansion: The number of PRTs in Afghanistan had increased from six in 2003 to 22.

2006 – Coherence: After the observation of different objectives and kinds of focus, more efforts were made to create more unity of effort in the PRTs¹⁰ When ISAF took over responsibility of the Eastern part of Afghanistan, the last coalition PRTs were transferred from CFC-A to ISAF.

The years after 2006 have not been defined, as the newest Handbook (Jan. 2007) has left out the description of the historical evolution. For the time being there are 25 PRTs in Afghanistan, whereof 12 are US and 13 are from other countries. Since autumn 2006, all PRTs belong to ISAF.

Organization: The standard PRT organization is one military component, one civilian component, and one headquarters component. A part of the military section facilitates development of Afghan National Army (ANA) and a part of the civilian component give the same kind of support to the Afghan National Police (ANP). The military component monitors the security situation and the civilian component helps facilitate good governance in a province. Simultaneously, the civilian section facilitates the delivery of humanitarian aid, reconstruction, and development projects by IOs and NGOs. The headquarters section should be comprised of both military and civilian personnel and provide logistics, intelligence, force protection, and linguistic support.¹¹

The missions of the PRTs are briefly to enhance security, strengthen the influence of the Afghan government, and facilitate reconstruction. Due to limited footprint and combat power,

the PRTs are not designed to strengthen the government's influence in a region by show of military force; rather they do so by demonstrating presence.¹² Together with the teams who work directly with the Afghan National Army (ANA), in ISAF called Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and in the coalition called Embedded Training Teams (ETTs), PRTs are the forces working directly for an end-state where international military forces can ultimately redeploy from Afghanistan. A precondition for bringing the international forces in Afghanistan home is a stabile country with a strong and disciplined army, and with a government which provides infrastructure and a satisfactory humanitarian situation.

The PRTs are organized with a battalion or regiment staff structure, with sections for personnel, logistics, intelligence, operations and planning, signals, economy and civil-military cooperation. In addition, they should have a political advisor and development officer, and a liaison from the MOI, normally an Afghan colonel. The core task of the PRT, which is to contribute to stability assistance, is conducted by Mobile Observer Teams (MOTs). In addition to that, all QRFs have arrangements for combat support, either through organic or external quick reaction forces or even by forward air controllers.

Command, Control and Coordination: All PRTs in Afghanistan have, since the autumn of 2006, belonged to ISAF. Within ISAF, a PRT would take orders from their higher echelon in the chain of command, i.e. the regional commander (RC). In RCs South and West there are intermediate command levels called Task Forces. In addition to the ISAF and Coalition military structure, the PRTs receive directives from interagency committees and groups. The highest organ is the PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC). It is chaired by the Afghan Minister of Interior Affairs (MOI), and the commanders of UNAMA, ISAF, and CFC-A participate, as well as the ambassadors of the PRT troop contributing nations. On the next level is the PRT Working Group

(PRTWG), which is chaired by the MOI Chief of PRT Section who is normally a Brigadier General. The group consists of representatives for UNAMA, ISAF, CFC-A, embassies from the PRT lead nations, and governmental organizations. The working groups on higher levels give directions to the PRTs. On a regional level one can find the Provincial Coordination Centers (PCCs). On 11 October 2005, ISAF and CFC-A agreed that the PCCs should be developed in conjunction with National Coordination Center (NCC), the National Military Command Center (NMCC), and Regional Command Centers (RCC).¹³

The directives from the ESC and PRTWG give guidance for PRTs to follow. It should be noted, however, that there is no enforcement of compliance according to these directions. The only chain of command which exists with actual command authority is, therefore, ISAF – RC – PRT (eventually with Task Forces as an intermediate link between PRT and RC in RCs South and West). As more nations have assumed responsibility for PRTs, the challenges associated with coordination have probably increased.¹⁴ The ISAF PRTs activities are regulated by NATO OPLAN 10302, Joint Forces Command Brunssum OPLAN 30302 and ISAF OPLAN 38302.

CHALLENGES OF THE PRTs

US Domestic Culture and Tradition for Civil-Military Cooperation: In the USA, there is a strict division between military and civilian elements of power. The main reason for this is the liberty of US citizens; they should not feel threatened by the nation's own military forces. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 forbids the use of US military forces in executing civilian law enforcement.¹⁵ It has contributed to a mindset which makes this feel unnatural even against foreign civilians. Another principle for the use of military forces is civilian control.

It seems like a shared view within the US military that the USA has to make a new arrangement for the command and control organization for fighting contemporary irregular warfare.

The branding is often “Goldwater-Nichols – and beyond.” As the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 secured an increased capacity for joint operations between the US military branches, the time may have come to make a similar act to implement an effective use of the other elements of national power, via legally mandated joint inter-agency commands. Many Western countries, like the US, have a clear division between military and civilian power. Institutional barriers between government institutions which helped to ensure democracy within the Western world during the 19th and 20th centuries could be an obstacle to effective operations in the 21st century.

Cooperation with Local Authorities: Western countries that send military forces abroad normally have a strong wish to end the engagement as soon as possible. This is due to the strain on resources connected to such operations, including the potential or actual casualties. Before Western forces can redeploy, however, the society of the country where forces have been committed should have reached some level of stability. The work of the PRTs is connected to this end state of a military commitment in an area in turmoil. In Afghanistan, one of the dilemmas with regard to local authorities is how the central government in Kabul and the international society define local authorities and with whom they choose to cooperate.

In Afghanistan the Western supported government has followed a pragmatic approach by accepting people with some “blood on their hands” in key positions in the present governmental and regional system. (This approach stands in contrast to what happened in Iraq, where the US led coalition disbanded the Iraqi Army and the Baath party.) Local figures, such as governors, police chiefs, and mayors, are such significant people. Stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) demands strong relationships between its implementers and local leaders. Cooperating with those who do not live up to Western standards of humanism must be said to be a pragmatic approach, and far less demanding than to challenge all people with power in the Afghan regions.

Another question is whether local authorities wish to cooperate with the PRT personnel. Particularly in areas with the highest tension, being perceived as a friend of the international forces or GOA is risky. The term "Kiss of Death" is used upon ISAF or coalition forces candidly approaching their partners in a hostile environment, who don't have sustained ability to protect these people.¹⁶ One normal consequence is that moderate people get killed when the extremists come back. This problem will be elaborated under "Force Protection."

Another challenge for PRTs is to follow the GOAs strategy. Since the international forces in Afghanistan operate to support a sovereign country, the strategies made by the central government have an impact on their missions. This is also the situation for the PRTs' location of resources. Since 2006, the Afghan government has established so-called Afghan Development Zones (ADZs).¹⁷ The ADZ concept is reminiscent of the French oil-spot theory, where the counterinsurgent forces established zones of prosperity and stability where the neighboring peoples get inspiration to be involved by these zones. There is, however, one very essential difference. While the French approach focused on areas where empire builders or counterinsurgents met local or isolated resistance, Afghan ADZs have been located in turbulent areas (where Taliban or War Lords oppose GOA, and where the international forces face a high number of threats, like Improvised Explosive Device - IEDs). The Afghan ADZ approach is like strengthening the position where one meets resistance versus reinforcement of success. This fact could lead to the most negative side-effect: that peaceful neighbors make trouble in order to get a share in the international distribution of prosperity. One of the classical lessons from irregular war is that whatever benefits which are distributed in such an environment, people have to deserve it (which means support the GOA).¹⁸ The PRTs are thereby caught in a dilemma between compliance with GOA by massing effects within ADZs or helping GOA to spread its influence outside the ADZs. When

a PRT patrol has visited their village, the PRT should make sure that the villagers don't get disappointed; as such disappointment can make people turn against the GOA. One of the means of keeping the promises is to establish a list of promises, a so-called "promise-tracker." An updated promise-tracker will also help the transition of authority from one unit to another.

Cooperation with International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations:

There are more than 300 international organizations or non-governmental organizations, and 1500 national organizations in Afghanistan.¹⁹ First of all, it should be noted that they have divergent purposes, objectives, and competencies. Even though they are funded mainly by Western governments, many of them would claim their independence from those same governments in their work out in the field. This is a great challenge to the PRTs, since IOs and NGOs can be considered as private companies with an official purpose. Much of the expertise needed for the reconstruction and stabilization of unstable areas like Afghanistan and Iraq is within organizations outside the direct reach of national power.

The exploitation of humanitarian efforts by the international military force and the fact that some SOF have operated in civilian clothes have blurred the distinction between onsite military forces and neutrals in the theater. Some claim that this lack of distinction is the reason for the Taliban targeting of international aid workers.

Military personnel would claim, conversely, that as emphasis shifts from emergency response to reconstruction and development, principles of impartiality and independence lose their applicability.²⁰ Without claiming that the military point of view is incorrect, it would be wise for military personnel designated for a mission in PRTs to prepare for their mission by studying the following three documents with regards to understanding the IO/NGO mindset:²¹

(1) The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, also known as the Sphere Standards. The principles of this charter are built upon the principles of the Geneva Conventions and UN. In particular, it expresses concerns about the erosion of borders between combatants and non-combatants; it stresses the principle of impartiality.²²

(2) The June 2004 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Paper on Civil-Military Relations in Complex Emergencies. This document's Part 2 E of describes the ideal of civil-military distinction in humanitarian action, and part 2 M M stresses the need to avoid any reliance on the military. Significantly, Part 3 C. emphasizes the use of military assets for humanitarian operations as a last resort.²³

(3) The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. The core message is found in principle 4 – “We shall endeavor not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.”²⁴

Since the local population normally would benefit from the work of the NGOs, there is a possibility that NGOs also contribute to the legitimacy of the political and military efforts in the country if their actions are coordinated with these institutions. This is an area where strategic interests and humanitarian principles might conflict. While the counterinsurgents need to gain support and trust of the local population by humanitarian and infrastructure projects, and in particular let the moderate forces benefit from their compliance, the NGOs would claim that this is a breach of their humanitarian core principles of humanity, independence, and impartiality.

Force Protection: No Western power would distribute units with such a small fighting power as a PRT without a good system of reinforcement. Some researchers claim that, when confronted with hostile forces, coalition PRTs also have the ability to reach back to significant “over-the-horizon” firepower through the use of close air support and quick reaction forces.²⁵ In real life,

the availability of reinforcement is unequally distributed, for such support depends on road infrastructure, distances, and weather. The vulnerability of PRTs will also depend on their sizes. A German PRT in Kunduz, manned by 500 personnel located close to an airport of medium standard, would be less vulnerable than a Norwegian led PRT in Meymaneh, which is manned by 180 personnel and is situated beside a low standard airfield far away from any QRF. One fact which is common for all the PRTs is that they do not have any combat power for conducting more than limited self-defence for a short period of time. This will differ from one PRT to another, depending on each situation.

A PRT should not only focus on Force Protection of the PRT itself, but also see how their actions affect the safety of their counterparts among local authorities, NGOs/IOs, and eventual reinforcement units. **If PRTs cooperate with NGOs, they should be concerned with the safety of NGO personnel. This may mean being candid about the eventual lack of capability to provide safety. Humanitarian aid workers get killed in Afghanistan. This indicates that insurgents do not make any distinction between military combatants and civilian NGO and aid workers, viewing both as extensions of Western and US political agendas.** The "Kiss of Death Syndrome" has been mentioned. This is a good reminder that when an international force finds sympathizers in a hostile environment, it should consider their safety.

Intelligence: Some NGOs which have expressed concerns about the quality of military assessments have shown no interest in improving that quality by providing valuable information to the military. As a result, they have given the appearance that they are ideologically opposed to having military forces conducting assessments. A lack of knowledge about NGO movements, locations, and actions impedes the ability of military commanders to be prepared to provide effective security assistance.²⁶ Sharing intelligence is perceived as a challenge between US agencies. The

challenges of sharing intelligence become particularly difficult when other nations are involved. These challenges could hamper force protection.

Cooperation with Other Departments: During the stability operation in Afghanistan, there has been an increasing understanding that mission success depends upon more than military resources. The State Department should have, but does not, sufficient expertise to provide the operations with political advisors and probably be the leaders to conduct nation building after the military had conquered the countries. The military has criticized State Department for lack of support in the GWOT, but this criticism is misplaced; only about 10 of the civilian surge positions are for State diplomats and about 10 more for USAID – and have been filled. These areas include political development and humanitarian development. The rest of the competencies, i.e. health care, urban development, and electricity, require specialists in professions not found among the employees in the Foreign Service and USA.²⁷ USAID has only about 1,000 Foreign Service employees total.²⁸ Thus, the US government has to find its partners among IOs and NCOs.

When agencies from different departments of government are merged on tactical level, funding and recruitment to billets become complicated. One example from Iraq showed that State Department and Department of Defense were arguing about a memorandum of understanding right up to the date of the establishment of one PRT. This caused confusion about who was responsible for what. This resulted in a general loss of State Department support. Administrative and security personnel from the REO were transferred out of Mosul, and the remaining Foreign Service members lost phone and computer connections, this resulted in no communication system available except borrowed, intermittently functional, military links.²⁹ This illustrates that interagency rivalry back in the capital city affects the execution on the ground.

Evaluation of US PRTs shows that military personnel take a shorter-term view than Foreign Service officers. The latter ones look at the longer-term payoffs from institution building. As FSO Chuck Hunter, team leader for PRT Babil in Iraq said, "The main point of divergence is in the time horizon... with the military focused on short-term effects and State/USAID concerned more with long-term outcomes. The main overlap is in the recognition that security and stability are essential for any of the other things we want to build."³⁰ This observation is also very interesting for other countries, since in the US, The State Department has prioritized assignments and started to provide training for those who serve in Afghanistan.³¹ The U.S. PRTs would profit from interagency delineation of civilian and military roles. PRT veterans believe that the addition of USAID representatives and better coordination with Afghan national development will improve US PRT efforts.³²

Funding: Funding forms an absolutely necessary criterion for success of a PRT, since without it the means of the PRTs gain support of the GOA would be limited. Donor funds can be managed directly by the members of the PRT, provided that the PRT nations follow up their responsibility to help them succeed. There are also Afghan national programs and donor-financed programs, directed by the PRT Executive Steering Committee / PRT Working Group.³³ In addition, ISAF is well placed to support these efforts via releasing funds from the following Trust Funds: Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF), Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA). GOA has also established National Priority Programs.

Summary of Experiences from PRTs: Considering cooperation with local authorities, the US led coalition, and now ISAF, have chosen a different approach than in Iraq. In Afghanistan the warlords exist within the government as governors and in regional central positions. This illustrates the environment wherein the PRTs operate.

With regard to coordination, the challenges concerning other agencies, IOs and NGOs still exist. While both military and civilian efforts would benefit from better coordination, the NGO/IO environment has valid arguments which should be known by any PRT operator. Three documents (The Humanitarian Charter, the June 2004 IASC Reference Paper, and The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement) form the basis of the mindset of humanitarian aid workers and should be read by military PRT officers. More coordination and exchange of information would probably also contribute to a better force protection, not only for the PRTs but also for the humanitarian aid workers. It would probably also ease the main effort, which is stability assistance. Force protection requires good intelligence and is provided by quick reaction forces which can reinforce the PRTs, both on the ground and in the air. Further, the PRT should consider how the safety of their partners is affected by their actions.

In addition to the challenges connected with coordination with organizations outside the governmental structure, there are still challenges concerning the synchronization of efforts between agencies representing the elements of governmental power.³⁴ Cultural differences between the Department of Defense and the State Department create obstacles. The State Department representatives contribute with insight into policy and the civilian sector, but they also have a more long-term perspective. This is a good argument for the value of the civilian element of the PRTs.

LESSONS LEARNED

USMC Military Lessons Learned: The PRT experience has formed a large part of the experience for the US Marine Corps' Combat Development Command's (USMC CDCs) concept for inter-agency campaign design. In the Corps Concept for Interagency Campaign Design, two of the elements are significant: the reminder that military forces may play a supporting role and the need to make the end state description focused and achievable are important. The Concept for IA

Operations also gives an example of a process for IA design, consisting of ten steps from initiating directive or guidance to the selection of lead agency for each task with the LLO.³⁵

The ISAF PRT Handbook: Robert M. Perito, a researcher who has evaluated US PRT efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, has been used as an advisor in the preparation of the handbook. US experience is, therefore, probably a basis for the ISAF PRT Handbook. ISAF's PRT Handbook of 2007 provides general guidance on how the PRTs should execute their mission. This is in addition to the specific operation orders provided by the regional commands. It gives a very good description of the situation in Afghanistan, with special emphasis on culture and structure of governance. Its appendices present useful models for understanding the PRT approach.

The handbook describes the purpose of PRTs: "First, kinetic operations are performed in an area, followed by non-kinetic operations, the second phase leading into a period of stabilization operations, which sets the ground for long-term transformational development efforts designed to ensure the area does not "slip back" to the left of the spectrum."³⁶ It should be noted, however, that this sequencing reflects a Western (and optimistic) view of how a situation develops after an intervention: conflicts have a short and violent initial engagement, then the intensity decreases. As the current situation in Northern Afghanistan shows, the tension and level of violence can also escalate in the opposite direction. Thus, an ideal model of decreasing tension after an intervention does not always reflect the realities of the operational environment.

Steps taken by the US Political Strategic Level: The lessons from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have led to initiatives from the political-strategic level. The USA has taken some steps in order to merge the efforts of military and civilian assets to their operations, and one interesting step has been to make the State Department responsible for PRTs in Iraq.³⁷

In December 2005 the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD)-44 stated that State Department would be the lead department in stabilization operations. For the moment this is only an ambition, due to the limited capabilities of funding and personnel within the US State Department. A week before NSPD-44 was published; the Department of Defense distributed its own directive for how the military should handle interagency operations. Even though the USA is moving towards a better merging of civilian and military capabilities, the cultural and organizational challenges are still considerable. No doctrine for interagency operations is published. For the moment, the US government is building an Interagency Management System (IMS) for strategic, operational and tactical level.³⁸ IMS is meant to provide staffs that will provide future stabilization operations with a relevant civilian staff. The field unit is called Field Advance Civilian Teams (FACT). This kind of units is called the new kind of PRTs.

CHALLENGES FOR NORWAY AS A LEAD NATION OF PRT MEYMANEH

Political Strategic Level: Significant differences of quantity and global ambitions make it important to select which US lessons can be applied for Norway. The US will normally find itself as the dominant nation in a military operation. Norway will be a force contributor. Therefore, it would be misleading to believe that Norway can choose its own PRT concept. Norwegian influence should go through NAC and ISAF. In this, Norway can increase its efforts to make its PRT more successful by providing more civilian resources.

As a military force detached to ISAF, the Norwegian led PRT is under operational control of ISAF. This is very significant, especially when one looks to US experience to find relevant lessons learned. Even though US PRTs are part of the ISAF chain of command, they are still working under US commanders and thereby working more directly for their government than a Norwegian PRT will do. Norway should monitor what the NATO chain of command, from the

North Atlantic Council (NAC) down to ISAF, wants, and then adapt to their requirements. When these are defined, the political strategic level should contribute by either tasking or direct funding, to help the nations' PRT to succeed. In addition to this, a proactive approach would be to canalize the humanitarian aid to Afghanistan to Faryab province.

Governments that lead PRTs need to ensure that adequate civilian expertise is provided to support PRT activities and that non-military positions are filled on a priority basis.³⁹ Like the US, Norwegian military forces can be ordered to deploy to areas of international conflicts. The fact that civilian employees within the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, or the Ministry of Humanitarian Assistance, or other offices do not have any duty to deploy makes it challenging to fill some civilian billets in PRT Meymaneh. Recruiting is, therefore, difficult for some categories. Within other categories, however, the recruitment is easier. Norwegians have had a long tradition of deploying within the framework of volunteer organizations to conflict areas. Non-governmental recruitment to the NGOs is therefore normally not a problem, but coordination is. NGOs have grown increasingly skeptical to the cooperation with military forces. This is a problem, because, as a contrast to the US where USAID works on behalf of the US government, Norway relies on volunteer organizations. Many of the operations that in the US would be termed inter-agency would therefore in a Norwegian context, be civil-military.

The humanitarian principles stand, as earlier stated, in contrast to a strategy of distributing benefits according to loyalty to the GOA. It is not only humanitarian workers who believe in a strict separation of military and civilian efforts: In 2008 a delegation of the Norwegian Secretary of Foreign Affairs visiting Afghanistan chose to reject an offer of military escort from the Norwegian forces in the country. A price was paid for this: During their stay at hotel Serena, the

delegation was targeted by Taliban, and one reporter was killed and a foreign services officer was severely wounded.⁴⁰

To ensure the NGOs are on the team, it is probably necessary to link funding to efforts in Faryab province. A forceful method is to make such cooperation a condition for funding. This would be a good method to achieve the comprehensive approach, or what in the UN has been called integrated operations effects. This solution seems unlikely, however, in the Norwegian political environment (independent of partisan politics). PRT commander will therefore be left to maintaining a good relationship to NGO/IOs in his sector.

In Norwegian public opinion, there has been criticism that too little civilian aid is provided to the Afghans. However, in 2008 the criticism is no longer correct, since Norway will spend 450 Million NOK (130 Million USD) on civilian projects and 570 Mill NOK (110 Mill USD) on military efforts.⁴¹ This presents a golden opportunity to turn a negative trend in Faryab. Of reasons which are already mentioned, there is not guarantee that such a "directed" assistance will happen.

The discussion of inter-agency operations in the US is relevant, due to similarities between US and Norwegian political culture with respect to civilian leadership and traditional reservation against interaction between military and civilian elements of national power. Since Norway has taken on a lead nation responsibility, the country should facilitate its humanitarian and infrastructure funding to Afghanistan to the Faryab Province, and thereby support the strategic goals in Afghanistan.

Tactical level: PRT Meymaneh is not in any "spot light" in Afghanistan, as it fell outside the focus of the ADZs. On political level within NATO, it seems that containment of the situation in North Afghanistan does not get any credit, because there is more kinetic operations in the South. What should be remembered is that Faryab is a classical example of the good "oil spot," where-

from peace should spread out over more turbulent areas. Mismanagement of expectations, combined with an uncritical distribution of societal benefits to areas where people don't comply with the GOA, could lead to a risk for increased tension. As argued in this paper, the improvement of the infrastructure and humanitarian situation in Faryab would contribute to contain the situation from growing worse. Since the Norwegian Department of Foreign Affairs has some economical means of funding, a good connection with the Norwegian Embassy would probably be useful to the PRT efforts.⁴² All available funds and civilian aid should be directed against areas that support GOA, since PRTs are an influence tool and not a "pure" aid program.

The lack of a Norwegian governmental system similar to USAID has been mentioned. In Faryab province (around the Norwegian PRT Meymaneh), all cooperation with NGOs and IOs within the Norwegian PRT sector takes part exclusively after the requests from NGOs and their premises. If the PRT is not provided with funding and civilian assistance from the Norwegian strategic level, the next solution should be a bottom-up approach. In this, the PRT, through the NCC, tries to acquire funding for the most essential needs, either from the Norwegian Armed Forces or from the State Department. If this is not done, the best solution a PRT Commander can hope for is a good relationship to the NGOs and contractors operating within his boundaries, in addition to UNAMA. When facing a complex problem on local level, there is a possibility that pragmatic leaders on the executing level will find good solutions by cooperation. A consequence of a continuous lack of humanitarian or infrastructure aid in Faryab would be reduced influence of GOA and reduced force protection of the Norwegian military. When MOT patrols show presence in a village, these patrols create expectations of some benefits of the local society. If these expectations are not fulfilled, people are likely to turn against the PRT and GOA.

Every Norwegian PRT officer and those dealing with the conflict in Afghanistan should learn the values and culture of NGOs/IOs. Not doing so, i.e. not comprehending their humanitarian principles, could form a strong argument for non-cooperation of some civilians in the field.

Intelligence and distribution is a challenge. NGOs should have the information needed for their force protection. Within the PRT it should be noted that other nations contribute with forces. Before, Finland as a non-NATO member was a contributor to the PRT. The approach which was applied to the Finns was to disseminate information on a "need to know" basis, e.g. when Finnish patrols and staff should have the information they needed to execute their mission and take necessary force protection measures.

CONCLUSION

With regard to coordination with civilian agencies, it has been stated that constitutions and cultures in Western societies have made a clear delineation between the military and the civilian agencies of government. This has its disadvantages in contemporary operations. Such a mindset also produces the problems in recruiting civilians for some billets.

Both the Europeans imperialist theories and the USMC CAP Program show that inter-agency and civil-military operations are not entirely new approaches. The PRTs in Afghanistan find themselves in a similar situation as earlier counterinsurgents: Their mission is to convince the population to make a choice to become loyal to their government, with ensuing progress in improving life quality should be highest in areas of compliance. Further, any operator and staffer working on the PRT concept should understand the humanitarian principles of NGOs and IOs to understand the tension between NGO or IO perspectives and his own mission. As a preparation for an assignment in a PRT, it would also be wise to study the PRT Handbook.

The PRT has to handle expectations management. A promise-tracker provides a good tool to avoid frustration among the local population. They should try to influence civilian resources to focus infrastructure development and humanitarian aid to areas where people support the government of Afghanistan. The political strategic level has established a funding for civilian resources to Afghanistan that are equal to the military funding. If some of these resources are directed to the Faryab province, these means can make the mission succeed.

Endnotes

- ¹ Daniel S. Challis. "Counterinsurgency Success in Malaya." *Military Review*. 67, no. 2 (February 1987): 56-69. This source is one of many describing the British success in countering Maoist guerrillas in Malaya.
- ² http://www.doubletongued.org/index.php/dictionary/oil_spot_strategy/. The French developed this theory, which later have been called ink-spot or ink-blot theory, in Indochina in the 19th century.
- ³ Curtis L. Williamson III, *The U.S. Marine Corps Combined Action Program (CAP): A Proposed Alternative Strategy for the Vietnam War*. (Quantico: Unpubl. paper USMC CSC, 2002): 17. The CAPs were composed of one squad of Marines, one corpsman, and one platoon of the popular forces (PF) of Vietnam. Even though the organization of the current PRTs is very different from the CAPs, the purpose of CAPs somewhat resemble the tasks of modern PRTs.
- ⁴ Jeffrey Race. *War Comes to Long An*. (New York, University of Colombia Press, 1973): 176.
- ⁵ The term "ISAF effect" was used by the British UN Ambassador Stewart Eldon during the discussions of 26 March 2002 about extending the ISAF mandate. By analyzing sources in this study, it has been very hard to find a concise definition of the ISAF effect, but the term could probably be associated with stabilizing the country and extending the authority of the legitimate government, compared to the Operation Enduring Freedom forces, who were chasing the Taliban and al Qaida.
- ⁶ Michael J. Dziedzic, & Colonel Michael K. Seidl. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*. U.S. Institute for Peace (Sep 2005): 3.
- ⁷ Michael McNerney. "Stabilization and PRTs in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?" *Parameters* (Winter 2006-2007): 36.
- ⁸ Robert M. Perito. *The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*. USIP Special Report 152 (Oct 2005): 3.
- ⁹ Perito. *The U.S. experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*: 3.
- ¹⁰ ISAF. *PRT Handbook* Edition 2 (2006): 2-5.
- ¹¹ Scott R. Peck. *PRTs: Improving or Undermining the Security for NGOs and PVOs in Afghanistan?* Unpublished paper. U.S. Naval War College (2004): 5.
- ¹² Peck. *PRTs: Improving or Undermining the Security for NGOs and PVOs in Afghanistan?*: 7.
- ¹³ ISAF *PRT Handbook* Edition 2, Appendix IV (2006): 4-1, 4-2.
- ¹⁴ Dziedzic & Seidl. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*: 4.
- ¹⁵ Donald D. Chapman. "Posse Comitatus Act." *The Oxford Companion to Military History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999): 555-556.
- ¹⁶ David Kilcullen. *Counterinsurgency in Iraq. Theory and Practice*, 2007. (Brief on internet, 2007).
[http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil/Counterinsurgency%20in%20Iraq%20theory%20and%20practice2007.ppt#308,22,Political "cycles" in the Iraq war to date](http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil/Counterinsurgency%20in%20Iraq%20theory%20and%20practice2007.ppt#308,22,Political%20cycles%20in%20the%20Iraq%20war%20to%20date)
- ¹⁷ Greg Mills, Terrence McNamee & Denny Lane. "Security Vortex, Warlords and Nation Building." *Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies* (01 Sep 2006) <http://www.rusi.org/news/ref:N454899C5DABDA/>
- ¹⁸ Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An*. (New York. University of Columbia Press, 1973): 176.

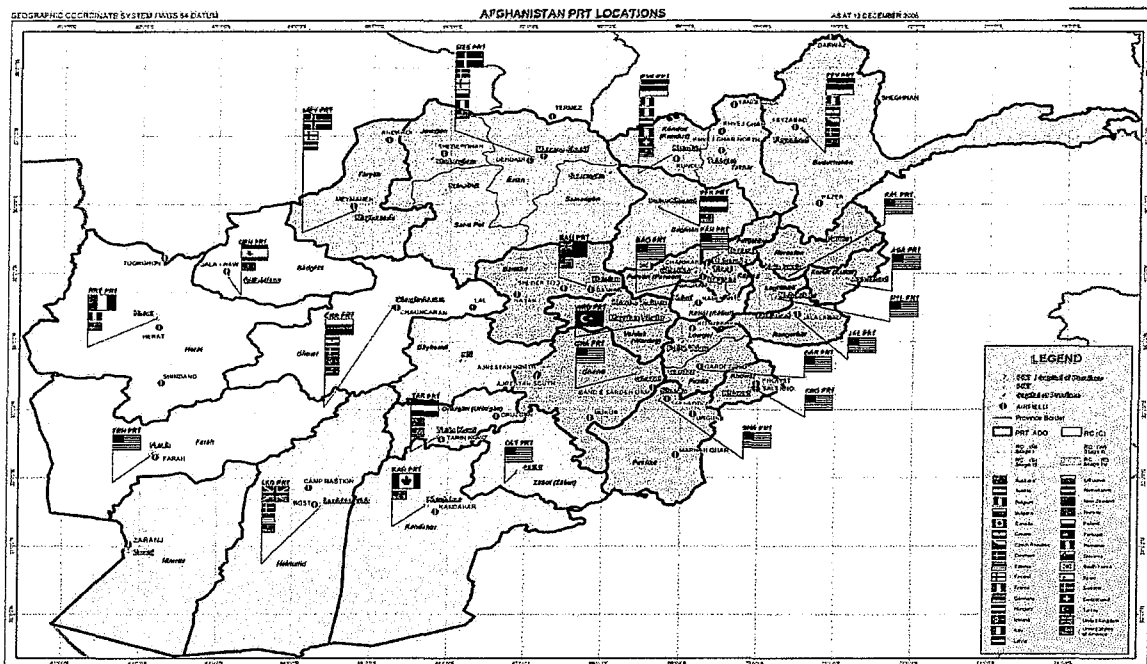
- ¹⁹ Peck. "PRTs: Improving or Undermining the Security for NGOs and PVOs in Afghanistan?": 8. The number of NGOs might have changed since 2004, but the point about complexity is still valid.
- ²⁰ Peck. "PRTs: Improving or Undermining the Security for NGOs and PVOs in Afghanistan?": 14.
- ²¹ Dziedzic & Seidl. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*: 12.
- ²² Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response and Interaction. *The Sphere Handbook 2004. Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief* (London: Oxfam, 2004)
- ²³ IASC. *Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies*. (2004)
- ²⁴ <http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/57JMNB#a3>
- ²⁵ Dziedzic & Seidl. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*: 4.
- ²⁶ Dziedzic & Seidl. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*: 11.
- ²⁷ Shawn Dorman, "Iraq PRTs – Pins on a Map." *Foreign Service Journal*. (March 2007): 27-28.
- ²⁸ Dorman, "Iraq PRTs – Pins on a Map" : 27-28.
- ²⁹ Dorman, "Iraq PRTs – Pins on a Map" : 27-28.
- ³⁰ Dorman, "Iraq PRTs – Pins on a Map" : 29.
- ³¹ Perito. *The US Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*. 13.
- ³² Perito. *The US Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*. 2.
- ³³ ISAF. *PRT Handbook Edition 3*. Annex B. Appendix 1. (2007)
- ³⁴ Perito. *The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*. 13.
- ³⁵ United States Marine Corps Combat Development Command. *A Concept for Interagency Campaign Design*. (2007). The concept lists the following ten steps: (1) Intervention directive or guidance., (2) Problem framed following critical discussion, (3) Planning assumptions discussed and listed, (4) Desired endstate developed, (5) Goals and objectives established, (6) Mission statement developed, (7) Consultations with Stakeholders, (8) Campaign architecture developed including selection of the desired logical lines of operation, (9) Conditions, tasks and initial assessment criteria formulated for each LLO, and; (10) Lead agency selected for each task with the LLOs.
- ³⁶ ISAF. *PRT Handbook Edition 3* (2007): 4.
- ³⁷ Robert M. Perito. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq*. USIP Special Report 185 (March 2007): 2.
- ³⁸ U.S. Department of Defense. *Report to Congress on Improving Interagency Support for US 21st Century National Security Missions and Interagency Operations in Support of Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations* (Report to Congress, June 2007)
- ³⁹ Dziedzic & Seidl. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*: 14.
- ⁴⁰ According to open sources after the terrorist attack.
- ⁴¹ The Norwegian Government. *Statsbudsjettet* (The Fiscal Budget) (2008). <http://www.statsbudsjettet.dep.no/Statsbudsjettet-2008/Statsbudsjettet-fra-A-til-A/Afghanistan/>
- ⁴² This does not necessarily mean a direct contact between the CO PRT and Ambassador. The Norwegian National Contingent Commander would be a natural intermediate link of such a contact.

Appendix A – Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
CAP	Combined Action Program/Patrol (A USMC concept of securing villages during the Vietnam War)
CFC-A	Coalition Forces Command – Alpha
CJCMOTF	Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force, the headquarters leading the Coalition Forces PRTs
CJTF-76	The subcommand of CFC-A which actively fights the remaining Taliban and al Qaida in the country.
CSCT-A	The subcommand of CFC-A which deals with training of the Afghan National Army, and which also interacts with the efforts to train the Afghan National Police
DOD	Department of Defense
ESC	(PRT) Executive Steering Committee
ETT	Embedded Training Teams (Coalition advisor groups to ANA)
GOA	Government of Afghanistan
GWOT	Global War on Terror
ISAF	International Stabilization Force Afghanistan
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom. The US led coalition against Taliban and al Qaida in Afghanistan
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOT	Mobile Observer Team, the military subunit of a PRT that conducts patrolling
NAC	The North Atlantic Council – the Political leadership of NATO, formed by representatives from all member nations' governments

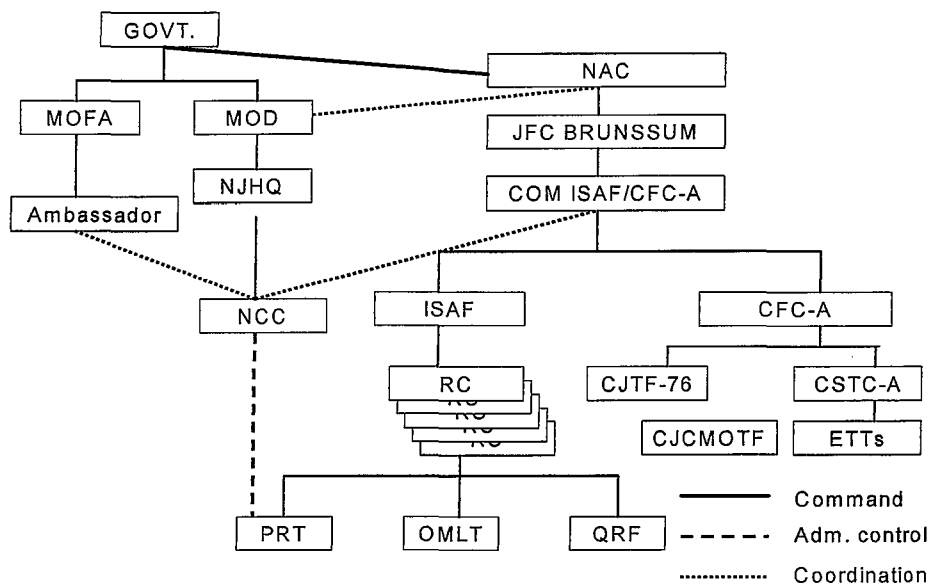
OMLT	Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (ISAF advisor groups to ANA on battalion, brigade, and corps level, equivalent with the ETTs)
PCC	Provincial Coordination Centers
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PRTWG	Provincial Reconstruction Team Working Group
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Appendix B – Map



Map: The figure shows a map over Afghanistan, including the Afghan province boundaries (red lines), the ISAF sectors (marked with different colors) and the locations of PRTs, with flags indicating nationality.

Appendix C – Command, Control and Communication



Command, Control, and Communication: This shows the command relationships of the Norwegian led PRT in Meymaneh. Even though the PRT is a subordinate to an ISAF commander (COM RC North), the Norwegian Contingent Commander, NOR NCC retains administrative control. The NCC can help facilitate support to the PRT by a good cooperation with COM ISAF, with the Norwegian Ambassador in Kabul, and with Norwegian authorities through the National Joint HQ.

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